Introduction

C ome on now, admit it, wouldn't you like to be viewed by others as a visionary leader with the knowledge and skills to make things happen? Reading this book and applying the suggested skills for personal and team improvement may not suddenly make you a dynamic visionary, but if you add another layer of skills and motivation strategies, perhaps it can assist you in reaching your dream position and accomplishing great things in your personal life and career. Mike Vance, former dean of Disney University and author of *Think Out of the Box* (1995), and other creative thinkers realize that merely being worried about the future is not enough, and that merely staring into the future will reveal little creative thinking. We futurists constantly remind our students and other clients to "THINK OUT OF THE BOX!" Thinking out of the box is a metaphor for creative futuring. To practice it, try connecting the nine zeros below by drawing only four straight lines without lifting your pen.

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Hint: THINK OUT OF THE BOX.

Thinking out of the box and other creative thinking activities are a good start toward unfreezing our minds to anticipate and manage our future world. This book will provide numerous exercises to lead your team to some breakthrough thinking about creating exciting, equitable, and high-performing schools, agencies, companies, and other

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organizations. According to Thomas Friedman (2005), "The world has gone from round to flat . . . and if I am right about the flattening of the world, it will be remembered as one of those fundamental changes—like the rise of the nation-state or the industrial revolution" (p. 45). Freidman's ten world flatteners include the removal of the Berlin Wall, which liberated millions from fear and communist domination toward the hope of democracy and free trade; Netscape, the Internet browser that brought the power of information to millions of people; outsourcing through the convenience of fiber optics and instant communications for marketing; and offshoring, which has saved U.S. consumers $600 billion and vastly improved the economies of India, China, and other nations around the world. The real anxiety of living in a flat world is whether the education system of the United States will prepare enough creative scientists, engineers, and school and corporate leaders to enable the country to keep its competitive edge. America must remain the leader in developing new technologies and total systems that other nations desire to duplicate. America needs futurists with the vision to inspire minds to create systems for better nutrition, housing, education, health care, travel, and political structures. Also, new visionaries are needed to help build a future where social justice is more than lofty words tossed about by social reformers and political hopefuls.

This book is about broadening your skills to create new and exciting learning organizations and, in the words of Henry Kissinger, to "take people [from] where they are and take them to places they have never been." Visionaries and their visions have inspired the creation of magnificent monuments that have withstood the ravages of time. The Greek temples, the Roman Colosseum, the chateaus of France, and Epcot Center had their genesis in someone's vision. According to leadership scholars Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus (1985), vision promotes a condition that is significantly better than the status quo by expressing a realistic, credible, and attractive organizational future. They speak metaphorically of vision as a target that beckons. Others call it *imagineering,* which is the process of creating exciting futures for a better, more just society.

Visions of shared leadership and bottom-up empowered organizations based on relationships are the new rage in organizational design. The traditional, top-down, bureaucratic, controlling model has gone the way of the typewriter. Well-oiled, predictable, clockwork systems are turning into people-centered, less precise, team-based learning

organizations that are creative, unpredictable, and messy and that make up things as they go along. This transformation causes discomfort for managers who have a need to control and stay on top of all personnel and their job responsibilities. Other administrators have developed greater tolerance for risk and ambiguity; they have high boiling points and thrive on information from research, reading, and constant interaction with others about new ideas.

The new leader is a creative gadabout who helps design corporate futures through visioning and persuading others to share the vision. These new leaders in new organizations must be better prepared in the art and science of administration and futuring than those of the past. Future leaders must be exciting personalities who have a passion for what they do and can share the passion in a vision to capture the imagination and energy of others. The old saying, "You can't light a fire with a wet match," means more than ever to an aspiring leader in education and other human service organizations. "Empowerment," "transformational leadership," "quality assurance," and "shared visions" are the catchwords of the day, but unless there is an energetic, ethical, and talented visionary to light the fire of others, very few visions will be realized. Visionary leaders create ideas, goals, team loyalty, and shared values. William E. May, an authority on leadership, believes that leaders must create goals, and that means imagining the future. Well-educated charismatic leaders with ideas for improving systems to enrich the lives of others are needed today more than ever. The world is a troubled place due to the widening gap between rich and poor, the promulgation of religious beliefs that include killing nonbelievers, and the preponderance of nations lacking the resources to house, feed, and educate growing populations.

The best and most proven way to learn the skills of visionary leadership is to observe or read about those we admire. Chapter 1, "What's Leadership Got to Do With Futuring?" explains the sometimes confusing relationship between leadership and futuring. This discussion begins with an inspiring story about the link between visioning and leadership; then there are an overview of research in leadership styles, a leadership questionnaire, and information about futuring, future studies, and visioning. In addition, the reader will find an explanation of the relationships between vision and belief statements, missions, and goals. The chapter closes with a futures scenario written by a 16-year-old high school senior who clearly ties futuring to powerful leadership to make his vision happen.

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Chapter 2, "Visionary Leaders I Have Known and Others I Wish I Had Known," is about seven leaders who embodied visionary leadership. Three of these leaders were my heroes from my early professional development; they shaped my life and career. The other four were visionaries who, by their acts of courage, caring, communication, and persistence, inspired millions of others to find the best in themselves and to share their visions for a better world. Each of the seven visionaries had his or her own leadership style and personality, but three key characteristics stand out to serve as guideposts for this book: They all had profound visions of service, they communicated the vision to others, and they persisted toward the vision. These three attributes must be present if a vision is to become a reality to make organizations more effective, inclusive, and supportive places. The review of the lives and contributions of these leaders offers readers a chance to gain insights into the attractive ingredients of visionary leadership and to reflect on the personal role models who have helped shape their own leadership styles and careers.

Chapter 3, "Motivating Others to Engage in Futuring," provides an overview of motivation research and its application to contemporary organizations. The futuring process is based on motivating others. When they don't understand motivation, school leaders struggle to inspire staff to meet the demands of the No Child Left Behind Act, which focuses on high-stakes exams and other rules and regulations. Because personal visions are the most motivating, the role of the visionary leader is to persuade others to rally around a shared vision of a cause beyond themselves; then they must communicate the vision to others and persist to make the vision a reality.

Chapter 4, "Making Visions Happen," includes strategies and inspirational stories about successful visionaries who transformed visions into realities and overcame the problems they faced. The importance of proper timing, good data, and financial support are presented to assist the leader in realizing the vision. The chapter ends with an account of a visionary public official with a dream for a more caring community and his leadership in making the dream happen.

Chapter 5, "Staff Development Techniques to Envision and Create Real-World Programs," contains a variety of step-by-step real-world futuring techniques to enliven workshops for learning skills to create real-world programs. Seven group and individual futuring activities are described. First is the Goodyear blimp visioning process, a very powerful activity for celebrating a national award

in the year 2016. The second activity is a step-by-step application of a modified Nominal Group Technique—Cooperative Processing, along with a practical example of its application in the Huntsville, Texas, schools. Next described is an activity for envisioning schools of the future, designed to create the most child-centered and high-performing school district in America by 2015. Next there are instructions on the use of the propositional inventory and its important link to the next activity, number five—scenario writing as a planning process, ending with an interesting example. There follows a detailed explanation of the Delphi technique, and the chapter ends with an example of using a future scenario to inspire visioning.

Chapter 6, "The Visionary Leader You Can Become," provides suggestions for how leaders can create a service vision, communicate the vision, and persist to make the vision happen. Stories about Colonel David Shoup in World War II, Arlene Blum, Wilma Rudolph, and other heroes will help readers gain greater knowledge and inspiration about how to become better than they think they can be. Oliver Wendell Holmes believed that the potential within us far outweighs the accomplishments of the past or the challenges of the present and future. Thus, this final chapter challenges you, the reader, to become a leader motivated by a service vision for others, to communicate that service vision through words and actions, and never to give up on making the vision happen.